

Peacetime Conscription in the United Kingdom:  
Balancing Rights, Responsibilities, and National Security

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Junior Division

Group Website

Website Word Count: 1200

Process Paper Word Count: 500

We chose the topic of peacetime conscription, or the army draft when there is no war, for several reasons. One of them was that Evelyn was pretty interested in the United Kingdom, and conscription has always fascinated her. She posed the idea to Mary, and once we did a deep dive into peacetime conscription, we found that the numerous stories and politics behind it were worth exploring. We chose to do a website because we wanted to learn how the NHD Web Central platform worked and how to build a website. Evelyn is even taking a web design class next year because of the curiosity she gained after starting this project.

We had to find how our topic related to this year's theme, which is "Rights and Responsibilities." After the passing of the National Service Act, at the end of WWII, the people's rights and responsibilities fell into place. Those who had no problem enlisting in the military in peacetime thought that it was their responsibility to serve their country to keep it safe and nationally secure and were willing to sacrifice their rights for their country. However, Conscientious Objectors thought that their rights to choose whether or not to join, to prioritize their religious obligations, and to make choices based on their morals outweighed their responsibility to serve. Even so, most did not protest peacetime conscription because the UK had many occupations for which they needed soldiers.

In the process of creating our project, we gathered sources, outlined what we were going to do, and started to create our website. When gathering sources, a few main sources we used were the UK Parliament (archives and website), interviews from Sky News, and many museums, including the National Army Museum, the Imperial War Museums, and the Royal British Legion. Another good source was the book, *National Service: 1945-1963, A Generation in Uniform*, by Richard Vinen. After that, we established what we wanted on each page: pictures, text, multimedia, etc. Then we put everything into NHD Web Central. Mary worked on "Short

Term Impacts,” “Peacetime Conscription” (main event), and “Rights and Responsibilities.”

Evelyn worked on “Wartime Conscription” (background), “Long Term Impacts,” “Conclusion,” and “Conscription Timeline.” We succeeded in figuring out how to use the website builder, but we had trouble not procrastinating.

In the 1940s, it was acceptable for peacetime conscription to be established, since the United Kingdom had many ongoing occupations at that time. Therefore, although some people rejected it, it was generally accepted. However, in 2024 during the last general election, a movement led by Rishi Sunak started pushing to start a new form of conscription. The difference between the 1940s National Service movement and today’s is that, this time, the majority of the younger generation does not support it. They feel they have no responsibility to serve their country while the United Kingdom lacks an urgent need. Much of the generation that will be primarily affected by this movement are against it because they believe that it is unfair.